

# ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

## FAST FACTS

### ASSET #20: Time at Home

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they go out "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

**52%**

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\*

### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Time at home" is one of four constructive-use-of-time assets.

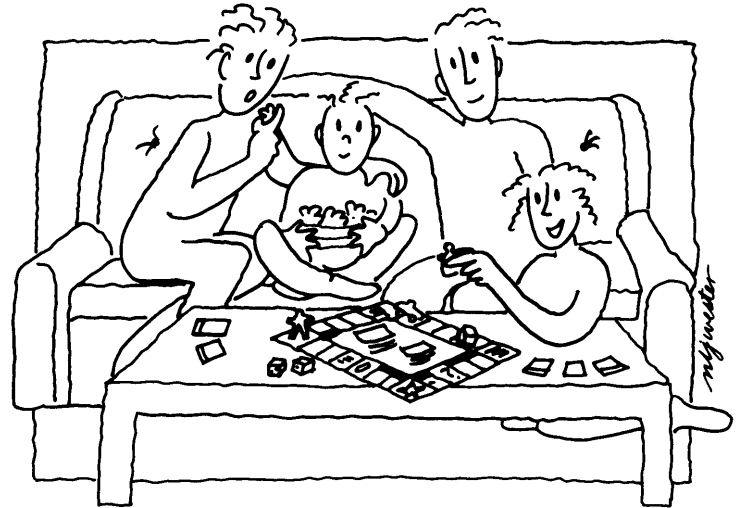
\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## Finding Your Way

Life isn't always easy to navigate. Work, school, activities, people, and other things can at times pull family members apart rather than bring them together. Too often, we feel as if everyone is traveling on a different road.

But we don't necessarily have to change our road maps radically in order to find family time. All we need to do is to get together and ask these questions:

- How do we feel about our schedules? Our time together?
- How can we better balance our individual commitments and our family time?
- Is anyone having their time use determined by others? (For example,



sometimes a child may have lots of time alone because others are busy.)

- How can we make home time more appealing?
- How can we steer our family more in the same direction rather than opposite directions?

## time together

Three ways to improve time at home with your child:

1. Some families face issues such as alcoholism, violence, or emotional abuse. If this is the case, home is not especially good for children. If you have these problems, be courageous and get help.
2. Choose an activity that the family can do for fun and recreation at home one evening each week.
3. Grade your family time based on the fun factor. How often do you laugh together? Have fun together? Enjoy being with each other?



### Time at the Table

It's an old idea but a good one: a great way for families to spend time at home together is to gather around the table for a meal. Asked how many times a week all the people in their household ate dinner together, 22% of surveyed youth said none or one, 32% said two to four times, and 45% said five to seven times. But the picture changes as youth grow older: 60% of 6th graders have meals with the whole household five to seven times a week, but only 29% of 12th graders do the same. How often do you gather the whole household at suppertime? Ask your teenagers for ideas about making meals worth staying home for!

## talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- How do you feel about the time we spend together at home as a family?
- How can we make our time at home more appealing?
- How much time do you think should be spent at home? Doing extracurricular activities? Doing other social things? Why?

**Quick Tip:**  
Turn off the TV and watch how much time you'll suddenly discover.

## 10 Ideas for Fun Times at Home

1. Rent a funny movie one weekday night. Make popcorn.
2. Have a family snowball, leaf, or soap suds fight.
3. Camp inside. Set up a tent or just pile sleeping bags on the living room floor.
4. Listen to the music that each family member likes and learn something about the performer.
5. Read the Sunday comics together.
6. Invite your child's friends over and treat them well.
7. Have a family treasure hunt complete with map and clues.
8. Hide fun notes for others to find.
9. Have a family breakfast in the sleepest member's bed.
10. Cook dinner together, each family member preparing a dish. Then, for a change, eat dessert first.

### More Help For Parents

**303 Great Ideas for Families** by Phyllis Pellman Good and Merle Good lists ideas on how to enjoy your time together as a family. (Published by Good Books.)

## FiNAL WoRD

**"There is nothing like staying home for real comfort."**

**—Jane Austen**

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org); 800-888-7828.  
Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005 by Search Institute. Major support for Search Institute's *Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth* initiative is provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.